

2008 Year End Report

Mt. Vernon-Black Township Parks and Recreation



2008 – Working through the budget woes!

The Mt. Vernon-Black Township Parks and Recreation Department continued providing a variety of recreational programs for Mt. Vernon. The Department personnel consisted of Director – John Tate, Recreation Manager – Adam Jines, Pool/Community Center Director – Ruth Fulwider, Maintenance Supervisor – Darin Toler, Maintenance Foreman – Brad Utley and Administrative Assistant – Debra Scott. The department also employed several part-time and seasonal employees throughout the year.

The Parks Director reported to the Parks Board every third Wednesday of each month. The agenda for these meetings consisted of old business from previous meetings and any new business or issues to be addressed. The 2008 Parks Board Members were Ron Bennett (President), Linc Baro, Kelly Cox, Don Oeth and Synda Waters.

The department continued to maintain five public parks in Mt. Vernon. The parks are Brittlebank Park, Fairview Park, Kimball Park, Kiwanis Park and Sherburne Park. The department also maintained the Community Center and Parks Office, Brittlebank Pool and Kiwanis Senior Citizen Center.

A Glance at 2008

The month of January brought to the City of Mt. Vernon a new administration. John Tucker took over as Mayor of Mt. Vernon and one of his first appointments was Don Oeth to the Parks Board in late February. Mr. Oeth was a nice addition to the Parks Board. Within a short time on the board he secured a grant from the Cops for Kids organization. These funds were used to support the youth programs and to offset the costs of volunteer background checks. Mayor Tucker did make a few personnel changes, but the Parks and Recreation staff remained the same in 2008.

The year 2008 was an interesting year when it came to budgeting. With the property tax issue at the forefront in Posey County, it made for quite a challenge in 2008. We began the year with a 12% cash balance from the previous year. So with this budget challenge ahead for the year, the staff did a great job of reducing spending and cutting down on labor cost. This was a difficult challenge especially in the middle of the three year minimum wage increase. All payroll lines were on budget for the year of 2008.

Even after being closed Memorial Day due to rain and the next two days because of school going late, the summer at Brittlebank Pool turned out to be possibly the busiest in history. With the price of fuel increasing over the summer and the economic downturn, it seems the residents of Mt. Vernon chose to spend more of their time and money at Brittlebank in 2008. We saw an increase of 22% in gate fees, 16% increase in gross concession sales and a 14% increase in season pass sales. Ruth Fulwider and the

staff did a great job over the 11 week season. During the season we did have anticipated problems with the chemical system and were able to make needed updates with a complete new chemical system. Budget wise the timing was not the best, but this capital improvement was long over due. This will increase the safety for our staff and the entire community as a whole. In 2008, we also replaced the doors at Brittlebank Pool and Shelter #1 with encumbered funds. With rising cost and expenses, we will look for creative ways to reduce spending and costs in the future. (For more information on Brittlebank Pool and the Community Center, read the attached CC/Pool Manager report.)

Some improvements to our parks were made in 2008 with the help of volunteer groups. In early May, the RiverBend Coalition group did a work day at Sherburne Park. They updated/improved the landscaping with roses and other plants. They also painted the bandstand and picked up trash in the park and along the riverfront. In 2007, we received a partial grant for playground equipment from the Posey County Community Foundation. So in June the Sabic volunteers teamed up with our department for a work day at Brittlebank Park to install the equipment. Along with the playground equipment, the volunteers installed sections of vinyl fencing that was donated from Westech, Inc. The day was a very rainy day, but the Sabic volunteers worked through it and completed the work. We are thankful for these groups and the time they volunteered to improve our city. At the end of 2008, the department was able to make a much needed improvement of the entrance and road on the Westside of Brittlebank Park. We had encumbered funds from 2007 for this paving project and had to complete the project in 2008 to use the funds.

The community center remained a popular spot for the youth to hangout in 2008. Most evenings throughout the season there were from 20-40 youth at the community center. The center teamed up with the Lion's club for a junior high dance after school began. There were well over 150 youth in attendance. The annual Pumpkin Festival and Christmas parties were held with many from the community attending these free events. The Community Center hosted 25 private skating parties in 2008. The staff will continue to look for new activities and special events to utilize the community center. In May, the department did host the second annual fishing derby at Brittlebank Park. Once again generous sponsors R & C Bait and Tackle, Dusty's Broken Arrow and Walmart supplied some great prizes. We had over 25 children attend this event.

After an 11% increase in 2007 of youth sports participants, 2008 saw a decrease of 7% in participation numbers. We also saw a decrease in the amount of Adults Sports teams in 2008. It is hard to say if the economy had something to do with this or not, but overall the numbers were consistent with past years previous to 2007. We look to improve the existing programs and attempt to introduce new programs in the future. We are thankful for the many volunteer coaches and parents that make our programs a success. (For more recreational sports information, read the attached report from the Recreation Manager.) With a wet Spring and a dry Summer, the maintenance crew stepped up to the challenge of maintaining the parks and the playing fields in 2008. They are the guys behind the scenes that play a vital role to the success of our department. We look forward to them continuing to provide clean and safe parks in 2009. This report is an

overview of 2008 and the activities and programs we provide, for more information on programs or details go to www.mountvernon.in.gov or stop by 118 Main St.

2009 – Looking forward to receiving 2008's appropriations!

With the combination of budget restraints and another minimum wage increase in July, the year of 2009 will be even more challenging than 2008. We will continue to tighten our belts and look for ways to reduce costs. We will continue to look to the future and continue to introduce improvement projects when our budget allows. After encumbering funds from 2008, we look to make improvements to the wading pool at Brittlebank and to make much needed repairs to the Parks Office/Community Center building.

Respectfully,

John D. Tate
Parks Director